

# THE WEST SUSSEX GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



## A GEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL STROLL AROUND TARRING

Starting at the West Worthing Railway Station, this walk takes about one hour.

Officially Tarring is called West Tarring or Tarring Peverell to distinguish it from Tarring Neville in East Sussex.

West Worthing Railway Station was opened on 4th November 1889 where, until 1938, the electrification of the South Coast line ended. There had been grandiose plans to build a line northwards through the Findon Valley to Horsham but this never came to fruition and the service was mostly met by the line from Shoreham through the Adur valley which was subsequently closed by the Beeching railway cuts in the 1960's.

From the station walk North across the railway crossing (notorious as one of the most frequently closed crossings in Europe) and up South Street Tarring, keeping on the left side of the road. Almost immediately at number 7 (and others) you will notice the use of large beach flints and erratics in the wall decoration. As you follow this trail, glance occasionally at the kerb stones – they are mostly of very hard wearing granite.



Further on, at number 49, notice the use of clinker in the walls. On this walk you will see flint used in the buildings in a variety of ways. The knapped flints are actually beach cobbles. These can be recognised by the occasional intact

cobble plus close inspection of edges of the knapped flints which reveals the 'chatter marks' typical of the surface of beach cobbles. Stop after crossing Athelstan Road and look across to the other side of South Street (the road you have been walking along) and you will notice the contrasting use of decorative flints in the buildings at numbers 92 & 96. Note the use of beach cobbles, in contrast to the Downland flints

(with white cortex and black cores) in the lower part on number 94 (1).

Stop again after crossing the next road, Ethelwulf Road, and look across South Street (on the eastern side again) to numbers 100 to 106 to again see the use of flints and erratics to decorate the walls.

Keeping to the left side of South Street, cross over Parkfield Road and follow the road (not the private road) round to the left. Enter the park on your left and either walk diagonally across the grass or walk in an anticlockwise direction around the perimeter of the park. Take the first gate on the right at the far side (north) of the park into Church House grounds. In the summer the bowling greens are bustling with activity.



Walk towards the left side of the church, St Andrews, (2) where there is an entrance to the churchyard in the flint wall on the right as you leave the area of the bowling greens.

Look out for the various building stones used in the church, particularly the Horsham stone roofing slabs (3) these often contain ripple-marks. These are very similar to ripples on the sand that you may find today on Worthing beach as the tide recedes and indicate similar conditions



when this stone was formed. Caen stone and Midhurst stone (4) has been used for the quoins (corner stones) and windows with flushwork flint walls.

Notice the particularly bad weathering of the quoins (5) in some parts and the varying attempts to repair the damage. It was often cheaper to ship stone from places such as Caen in France

than transport it across the Weald as, until fairly recently, links to the rest of the country were very poor. If you are able to enter the church you will be able to see the Caen stone pillars and the impressive mosaic panels of the twelve apostles, together with the heads of eight patriarchs from the Old Testament and the Apostles' Creed, covering approximately 200 square metres of the north, west and south walls of the nave.



This is said to be one of the finest and largest mosaics in the country. It was designed by the Victorian architect William Butterfield and constructed in 1885. It is believed to be based on mosaics he had seen at Ravenna.



Take time to look at some of the tombs in the churchyard (6) and notice the weathering. Many gravestones have been reused in the path west of the north door. To the west of the north door is a large tomb in the shape of a celtic cross carved in granite. The granite contains large crystal phenocrysts (7).

Walk towards the lychgate (8). Notice the further use of Horsham stone to roof the lychgate at the entrance. Leaving



the churchyard through the lychgate, turn immediately right. You will notice a fairly recently repaired flint wall. The damage was caused by an accident a few years ago when a coach crashed through the wall and damaged the property beyond.



A paperboy survived the accident because he was having an illicit smoke nearby in the churchyard and would otherwise have been in the path of the 'out of control' bus - the bus driver was killed. Luckily, there were no passengers on board at the time.

Continue along this road, noting the use of beach cobbles and angular flints in some of the other buildings. Cross the road at the pedestrian crossing and walk north up High Street Tarring.

You will pass the George and Dragon (9) public house on your left. A license for a tavern on this site was granted about



1597. It was then called the 'White Horse'. In 1781 the name was changed to 'The George' and in 1855 the 'Dragon' was added. For many years, in the early 19th century, it was much used by smugglers and at the same time as an

excise office by the Preventive Officers. A strange combination! Continue on as far as The Vine public house, on your left. This has recently been refurbished and has lost some of its character as a result but call in for a halfway drink. Sit in the garden if you can or just take a look at the site of the old brewery. Recent attempts to restart brewing here unfortunately failed.

While retracing your steps back along the High Street, take time to look at the range of old buildings and signs. Parsonage Row (10), at one time a museum of Sussex folklore, is now a restaurant. It is one of the oldest buildings in the Worthing area, dating back to mediaeval times. Note that it again makes good use of Horsham stone as a roofing material.



You will now reach Glebe Road. Cross over but go slightly left to the Old Palace (11), now a dance school. This was a former Palace of the Archbishop of Canterbury, dating back to 1250. The walls are a mixture of flint, chalk, Caen stone,



Midhurst stone, brick and tile. It has a roof of Horsham stone. You will notice the use of true green Upper Greensand in the lintels forming the arch of the west door (12). This may have come from the Eastbourne area or the Isle of

Wight. If you have the time, try to identify the different rock types, although close access may be difficult. An annual market is held here on the first Saturday in June under Royal Charter.

Leaving the Old Palace turn left and continue south down South Street Tarring.



On your left, by a house called Bishop's Garth, you will see a plaque on the wall referring to the site of the ancient fig gardens.

These gardens date from at least 1745, although they were allegedly originally planted by Thomas á Becket but this has never been proven. They are the remains of the formerly extensive fig gardens and are now open to the public on the first Saturday in July.

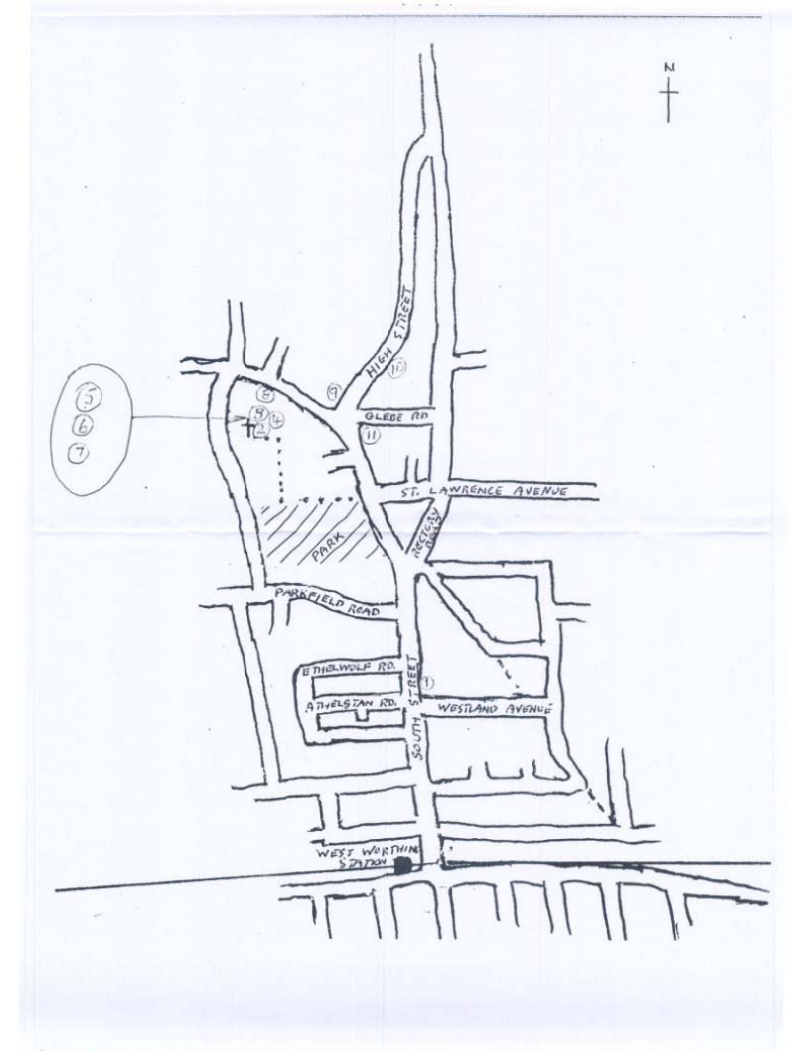
A few yards further on look at the large boulders and flints (again) used with decorative effect in the walls of the houses on either side of the road.

Retrace your route down South Street to the level crossing and back to West Worthing Station where you started.

#### West Sussex Geological Society 2016



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- Founded in 1977 with over eighty members
- For all interested in geology, from beginners to experts
- Welcomes new members
- Issues the Outcrop magazine twice a year

Our Meetings are held on the third Friday of every month, except for July and August, at St. Stephens Church, Angola Road, Worthing BN14 8DU, starting at 7.30 p.m. on the third Friday of the month and are varied and interesting programme given by guest speakers

Our Field Trips are whole or half day, usually at least 6 a year, with a longer residential trip for in the Spring enabling us to go further afield., and include landscapes, rocks fossil and mineral collecting

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